

Petition S4-0002, filed on behalf of catfish producers.

Background:

On November 25, 2003, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announced that producers of catfish in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah were eligible to apply for benefits under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers program as the result of a petition filed by the Catfish Farmers of America, Rutledge & Rutledge, Newport, Arkansas, and the Western Regional Chapter of the Kentucky Aquaculture Association, Farmington, Kentucky. The FAS Administrator found that increased imports of catfish and fillets of Vietnamese *basa* and *tra* had contributed importantly to a 20.9-percent decline in the domestic producer price during the 2002 marketing year (January - December), when compared with the previous 5-year average.

In order for TAA benefits to remain in place for a subsequent year, the TAA regulation specifies that the Administrator shall determine whether or not further increases in imports contributed importantly to a 20-percent or more decline in producer prices from the original 5-year base period. This determination is made prior to the anniversary of the initial certification

Analysis:

USDA evaluated producer prices in the monthly Catfish Processing report prepared by the National Agricultural Statistics Service of USDA. The data revealed that catfish producers received an average price of \$0.581 per pound during the 2003 marketing year. The average price for the base period (MY 1997-2001) was \$0.718 per pound. The 2003 average price was 80.9 percent of that for the base period, indicating a decline of 19.1 percent from the base period. Furthermore, imports of competitive products in 2003 declined by 16.2 percent.

Reason for denial of petition:

To qualify for TAA, imports of competitive products must increase, and the average producer price must decline by more than 20 percent from that of the base period. Consequently, the petition was not re-certified, and notice was published in the Federal Register on November 24, 2004.